

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application, as amended herein, is respectfully requested.

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Claims 9 - 11 and 13 - 14 are presently pending in the application. Claims 9 and 13 have been amended to put those claims in condition for immediate allowance, pursuant to item 6 of the above-identified Office Action. Claims 1 - 8 and 12 have been canceled, without prejudice, in order to place the instant case in condition for immediate allowance. Applicants reserve the right to further pursue former claims 1 - 8 and 12 in a future continuing application.

Additionally, Applicants gratefully acknowledge that, in item 7 of the Office Action, claim 14 of the instant application has been indicated as being allowed. Applicants also gratefully acknowledge that, in item 6 of the Office Action, claims 9 - 11 and 13 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 9 and 13 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the claims from which they depend. Claims 10 and 11 depend from rewritten claim 9.

As such, it is believed that all claims of the instant application are in condition for immediate allowance.

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Responsive to Office Action of December 1, 2005

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In item 2 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over U. S.

Patent No. 5,923,624 to Groeger et al ("GROEGER") in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,823,225 to Sass ("SASS") and further in

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view of In re Venner [citation omitted]. In item 3 of the Office Action, claims 3 - 6 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over GROEGER and SASS, and further in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,111,963 to Thompson, III ("THOMPSON") and In re Venner. In items 4 and 5 of the Office Action, claims 2 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over GROEGER in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,867,776 to Noda ("NODA").

Applicants respectfully traverse the above rejections.

However, the above rejections are presently obviated by the cancellation from the instant case of claims 1 - 8 and 12.

As such, Applicants shall reserve their arguments for the patentability of claims 1 - 8 and 12 for a later time, when claims 1 - 8 and 12 are again presented in a continuing application.

It is accordingly believed that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, teach or suggest

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the features of claims 9, 13 and 14. Claims 9, 13 and 14 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art. The dependent claims are believed to be patentable as well because they all are ultimately dependent on claim 9.

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In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 9 - 11, 13, and 14 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate receiving a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested, as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

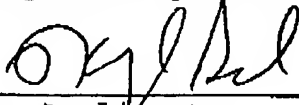
If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any fees that might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

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Respectfully submitted,

  
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For Applicants

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March 1, 2006

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